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ABSTRACT

A survey form, used in a recent survey to determine what issues or dilemmas are important to school supervisors today, was used in a similar survey conducted to determine the concerns of second language supervisors in New York State. Supervisors were asked to rank order five issues which they considered to be the most important out of 17, and to list other issues which they felt were important but were not included in the survey. Results of this survey were similar to those of the original. The following were viewed as the major issues in need of clarification and professional development: (1) teacher evaluation; (2) leadership in instructional change; (3) relationship of supervisors to children; (4) curriculum development and instructional improvement; and (5) the basis of their supervisory authority. (AM)

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ISSUES IN SUPERVISOR ROLES: A SURVEY

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Abstract

Based on a similar survey conducted by the Association of Supervisors and Curriculum Developers (ASCD) Working Group in Supervisory Practices, The New York State Association of Foreign Language Teachers (NYSAFLT) Committee on Supervision conducted a survey of issues and problems faced by second language supervisors.

The survey of NYSAFLT language supervisors shows strong parallels to that of the ASCD respondents. These supervisors view evaluation of teachers, leadership for instructional change, their relationship to children, the development of curricula and improvement of classroom instruction, and the basis of their supervisory authority as the major issues which need clarification and professional development on their parts.

ISSUES IN SUPERVISOR* ROLES: A SURVEY

What is the role of supervisors today? What are their top concerns?

Recently the ASCD (Association of Supervisors and Curriculum Developers) Working Group in Supervisory Practices conducted a survey among its members from various parts of the United States to determine what major issues or dilemmas were important to supervisors in schools today. The group surveyed placed teacher evaluation leadership for change, relationship to children and source for authority on the top of seventeen issues presented.

The NYSAFLT Committee on Supervision expressed a similar interest in determining the concerns of second language supervisors in New York State for purposes of establishing workshops for the 1977-78 academic year. It was decided to administer the same survey form which ASCD had sent to its members.

ASCD SURVEY

Table 1. Highly Important Issues Regarding Supervisory Practices

Issue Number and Statement	*High* Ranks Assigned*		*Mean Rank*
	Number	*Percent*	
1 Teacher evaluation *vs.* evaluation of instruction only	88	54	2.4
3 Helping individual teachers *vs.* leadership for instructional change	85	52	2.5
11 Teacher and program as central focus *vs.* child and learning	73	45	2.6
4 Pro-active initiation of change process *vs.* responding to needs	69	42	2.7
13 Supervisor authority based on expertise and interpersonal relationships *vs.* conferred status and decision-making responsibility	65	40	2.9
17 Working to develop curricula and materials *vs.* improving classroom instruction	66	40+	3.0
16 Relying on teachers to promote their own improvement *vs.* cooperatively working toward goals	64	39	3.2

* High ranks refer to issues ranked as one, two, three, four, or five out of seventeen.

Table 2. Least Frequently Ranked as Highly Important Among Seventeen Issues

Issue Number and Statement	*Frequency of High Ranks Assigned*
2 General supervision *vs.* specialized supervision	42
5 Instructional program responsibilities only *vs.* a member of administrative staff	16
6 Collegial relationships with principals *vs.* a member of the staff	30
7 Assignments within a single school *vs.* among several schools	22
8 Highly structured schedules *vs.* flexible scheduling for supervisor's time	24
9 Program or subject task assignment *vs.* broad-issues approach	23
10 Diffusion of responsibility for supervision *vs.* concentration in hands of supervisory staff	52
12 To model, advise, suggest *vs.* to facilitate, interest, collaborate	45
14 Involvement in collective negotiations as management *vs.* as teacher *vs.* neither	31
15 Supervisor team *vs.* individual assignment	19

*The term "supervisor" is used here as a generic term referring to various positional titles such as department head, chairman, coordinator, team leader. All are concerned with improving instruction.

Tables 1. and 2. show the ASCD results based on responses from 163 supervisors. The commentary below is quoted directly from the December 1976 Educational Leadership article which reported this survey.

Table 1. shows the frequency of high-priority ranks assigned and the mean of ranks assigned to the top seven issues. Nearly 40 percent of all respondents assigned these issues high ranks. On the average, these seven issues were so highly ranked that the mean response to them was 3.2 or better.

The mean rank of these high-priority issues was markedly close. The issue statements remaining from the seventeen presented to responding supervisors were distinctly lower in frequency of high ranks.

Of the seventeen issues presented to respondents, no one issue was ranked overwhelmingly as first or second in importance. Conversely, not a single issue selected by the Working Group on Supervisory Practices was rejected. In fact, all of the seventeen issues were ranked among the top-priority issued by at least 10 percent of the respondents. It is interesting, however, to consider those issues that seem highly important to only a few.

Table 2. shows the frequency of high ranks assigned to the ten least important issues. Of these less important issues, only issue 10, relating to the problem of diffusion of supervisory responsibilities, comes close to the highest priority issues in Table 1.

One set of the lowest ranked issues includes those relating to ways of working with others; issues 2, 6, 9, 10, and 12 refer to general supervision, collegial relationships, task assignments, sharing responsibilities, and directiveness. None of these, common as they are to the folklore of supervision, seems to be considered among the highest priority issues by these respondents. Issue 3, "Helping individual teachers vs. leadership for instructional change" is, however, one of those highest ranked.

The very lowest set of issues in ranked importance relates to external sources of expectations and organizational structure for supervisors; issues 5, 7, 8 and 15 (dealing with the way supervisors are organized, are assigned to a staff, are scheduled, and are working with team members) are not seen as highly important.1

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NYSAFLT SURVEY

Table 3. Highly Important Issues Regarding Supervisory Practices

Issue Number and Statement	High Ranks Assigned		Mean Rank
	Number	Percent	
1. Teacher evaluation vs. evaluation of instruction only	18	72	2.7
3 Helping individual teachers vs. leadership for instructional change	17	68	2.6
11 Teacher and program as central focus vs. child and learning	12	50	3.7
17 Working to develop curricula and materials vs. improving classroom instruction	12	50	3.4
13 Supervisory authority based on expertise and interpersonal relationships vs. conferred status and decision making responsibility	10	40	2.8

NYSAFLT SURVEY

Table 4. **Least** Frequently Ranked as Highly Important Among Seventeen Issues

Issue Number	and Statement	Frequency of High Ranks Assigned
6	Collegial relationships with principals vs. a member of the staff	8
4	Pro-active initiation of change processes vs. responding too needs	7
2	General Supervision vs. specialized supervision	7
10	Diffusion of responsibility for supervision vs. concentration in hands of supervisory staff	6
16	To rely on teachers to promote their own improvement vs. to work cooperatively toward goals	6
5	Instructional program responsibilities only vs. member of the administrative staff	6
7	Assignments within a single school vs. among several schools	6
8	Highly structured schedules vs. flexible scheduling for supervisor's time	5
12	To model, advise, suggest vs. to facilitate, interest, collaborate	3
9	Program or subject task assignment vs. broad issues approach	3
14	Involvement in collection negotiation as management vs. as teacher vs. neither	3
15	Supervisor team vs. individual assignments	1

The survey of 25 NYSAFLT second language supervisors shows strong parallels to that of the ASCD respondents. The number surveyed for NYSAFLT is considerably smaller, and a broader survey might be undertaken at a future time to determine any changes in priorities over the next few years.

Table 3. shows the NYSAFLT supervisors' responses on high ranked priorities. Five issues stand out having been selected by at least 40 percent of the respondents. The mean response to them was 3.7 or better with issues 1, 3 and 13 within .1 of each other. It is interesting to note that issues 1, 3, and 11 were the top 3 in that order in the ASCD survey as well. Issues 17 and 13 were 4th and 5th on the NYSAFLT survey and 6th and 5th respectively for ASCD. Issues 1 and 3 were almost equal in high ranks assigned and stand far above all other issues in number and percentages.

Table 4. shows the frequency of high ranks assigned to the twelve least important issues which are listed in order of priority. No issue of the seventeen was rejected by the respondents although issue 15 was chosen by only person. Issues 12, 9, 14 and 15 are also among the lowest ranked on the ASCD survey.

As with the ASCD survey the lowest ranked issued included those related to the technical aspects of working with others and the organizational structure such as working in teams, collective negotiations, scheduling, and assignments to school(s).

Conclusions of Survey

Second language supervisors view evaluation of teachers, leadership for instructional change, their relationship to children, the development of curricula and improvement of classroom instruction and the basis of their supervisory a thority as the major issues which need clarification and professional development on their parts.

The survey does not tell us <u>how</u> supervisors stand on these issues, only that they are important and need further study and work.

Other Possibilities

This survey also urged open-ended response to other issues:[2]

A. Special problems of improving secondary instruction.
B. Special problems growing out of collective bargaining by organized teacher groups.
C. Special problems of supervisors in acquiring and refining professional supervisory skills and competencies.
D. Additional critical issues.

2. See appendix for detailed concerns in each category.

Many responses to this section were received, some elaborating on issues already ranked, others bringing forth new issues: 1) the supervisor's need for time, funds, and opportunities to grow professionally, 2) how to innovate new curricula in times of declining enrollments and retrenchment, 3) the need for articulation, horizontal and vertical, 4) the need for time to accomplish all assigned administrative and supervisory duties, 5) the development of interdisciplinary programs, 6) the need for a strong public relations component in the supervisor's job.

The issues mentioned most often in this section were 1) the motivation of the tenured teacher with seniority to change (more positive verbal and non-verbal classroom behavior, more student-centered instruction, less elitist, academic orientation, more self-evaluation rather than outside evaluation and 2) the acquisition of time, money and authority to accomplish the many objectives of language supervision and their self improvement.

This study is only the first step in the work that needs to be accomplished by second language supervisors in the future. Now that the major issues have been identified, work can begin on providing the supervisor with the techniques and information he/she requires <u>most</u> urgently through workshops, materials and the exchange of ideas. The obstacles of time and funding are difficult to surmount, sometimes impossible. Alternatives although not necessarily ideal or acceptable under better conditions must be found and shared. The process of trying to improve ourselves and others may be hindered but should not be abandoned. There <u>is</u> strength in numbers; the language supervisor though alone in his/her district, is not alone on the state level.

APPENDIX

A. Special problems of improving instruction in secondary schools

1. Innovations in curriculum development - how to without $ (2)
2. Articulation - 2 schools, 2 persons vertical, horizontal (4)
3. Interpersonal relations
4. Inadequate time to deal with job (2)
5. Defining roles and responsibilities of supervisory team members
6. Interdisciplinary approaches, interdepartmental work
7. Finances
8. Heavy staff load reducing motivation to innovate
9. Time - paperwork and bureaucratic record keeping overwhelming
10. Impact of scheduling and guidance on FL programs (3)
11. Convincing guidance and administration to attend FL dept. meetings
12. Development of district-wide exams without $
13. Instructional leadership vs. evaluators or administrators
14. Selction process for hiring teachers

B. Special problems growing out of collective bargaining by organized teacher groups

1. Assignments given to supervisors (too many)
2. Antagonism between faculty and administration
3. Class size, number of preparations, program needs
4. "Middleman" position of Department Chairperson
5. How to motivate tenured teachers with seniority (7)
6. Combating elitism, changing verbal behavior among teachers (3)
7. Contractual obligations-teachers teach only what they have to (5)
8. Does supervisor belong to teachers' or administrators' unit?
9. Avoid limiting numbers of observations contractually

C. Special problems of supervisors in acquiring and refining professional supervisory skills and competencies.

1. Time and funds lacking, number of conferences, keeping up to date (5)
2. Use of media, role playing, management by objectives
3. Difficulty of finding useful courses which stress application as well as theory (2)
4. Where? - for courses
5. How to foresee needs - what do I need to learn?
6. Inservice workshops - support (or no cost) and content, cources for materials (2)
7. CBTE - how to deal with
8. Sabbaticals
9. Exchange visits with other schools

D. Additional Critical Issues

1. Retaining staff and program - declining enrollments and retrenchment (4)
2. Supervisor as PR person vs. expert in instruction only (4)
3. Updating courses; introduction of new courses during retrenchment (2)
4. Teacher self-evaluation of their relationship with students and involvement with school community
5. Conflict with principals for authority indetermining programs in specialized areas
6. Job description clarification
7. Supervisors as administrators
8. State mandate for FL
9. How can supervisors best assist staff in professional growth - rapport with in and out of school contacts

Suggest Issues Please

A. Special problems of improving instruction in secondary schools (Department Chairmen, Principals, role of Assistant Principals, Over-all coordination).

_____

_____

_____

_____

B. Special problems of improving instruction growing out of collective negotiations by organized teaching groups.

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_____

C. Special problems of supervisors for their acquiring and refining their professional skills and competencies.

_____

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_____

D. Additional critical issues:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Professional position (please check)

Public school_____

College or University_____

Interest level

Elementary_____

Secondary_____

Both_____

ISSUES IN SUPERVISORY PRACTICE

The ASCD Working Group on Supervisory Practices is in the process of identifying "critical issues." Listed below are several issues which have been tentatively identified for study. Would you please rank order the five (1 through 5) issues which you consider to be most important. Indicate your ranking of the issue in the blank preceding the statement.

Please also indicate in the space provided those critical issues which have not been identified in this list, but which should be studied.

Issues and Problems

_____Teacher evaluation vs. evaluation of instruction only.

_____General supervision vs. specialized supervision.

_____Helping individual teachers vs. leadership for instructional change.

_____Pro-active initiation of change process vs. responding to needs.

_____Instructional program responsibilities only vs. a member of administrative staff.

_____Collegial relationships with principals vs. a member of the staff.

_____Assignments within a single school vs. among several schools.

_____Highly structured schedules vs. flexible scheduling for supervisor's time.

_____Program or subject task assignment vs. broad issues approach.

_____Diffusion of responsibility for supervision vs. concentration in hands of supervisory staff.

_____Teacher and program as central focus vs. child and learning.

_____To model, advise, suggest vs. facilitate, interest, collaborate.

_____Supervisor authority based on expertise and interpersonal relationships vs. conferred status and decision-making responsibility.

_____Involvement in collective negotiations as management vs. as teacher vs. neither.

_____Supervisor team vs. individual assignments.

_____To rely on teachers to promote their own improvement vs. to cooperatively work toward goals.

_____Working to develop curricula and materials vs. improving classroom instruction.

- MORE -